

DISCUSSION BULLETIN  
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cadre and the Catholic Church in the politics of the group and the essentially nationalistic policies it is now promoting. Also worth reading are Bob Black's review of a book that questions the primitiveness of the Kalahari desert bushmen, the San!, and an article on the Sem Terra, a Brazilian peasant movement that is successfully occupying unused land. \$6 for a single copy by mail, \$16 for a four-issue sub from C.A.L., PO Box 1446, Columbia, MO 65205. Makes checks payable to CAL.

*Internationalist Notes*, (No. 1, December 1998) "is published by a small nucleus of Left Communist workers....Our aim as workers is the establishment of a stateless, classless, moneyless society without exploitation, national frontiers or standing armies." This eight-page issue contains articles on Pinochet, the 1998 Canadian elections, and the end of WWI. IN expects to publish regularly in French and English. Free from Internationalist Notes, c/o C.P. 266, Succ "C", Montreal, QC, Canada H2L 4K1.

*Aufheben: Revolutionary Perspectives* (No. 7 Autumn 1998) contains three major articles: "Social Democracy: No Future?" This is billed as the introduction to a coming series of articles on the "retreat of social democracy." The twenty-page "State of the Unions: Recent U.S. Labour Struggles in Perspective" begins with a quite detailed examination of U.S. labor history from 1877 on. The wide ranging discussion contrasts what the authors see as growing working class militancy in the U.S. to the relative quiescence of British during the last decade. Although *Aufheben* has no illusions about the role of the unions and the union leadership in controlling the working class, it seems to attribute the recent increase in strikes to changes in the union leadership and wonders whether our rulers are getting ready to throw us the social democratic bone that was the prescription for calming us in the Thirties. The article has some interesting political and economic insights that deserve a wider audience. Unfortunately it's a bit long for the DB to pirate. The third article is "What Was the USSR? Toward a Theory of the Deformation of Value under State Capitalism, Part II: Russia as a Non-Mode of Production." Part I dealt with the Trotskyist view of the USSR as a deformed worker's state; this sixteen-page section deals with another Trotskyist view, that of Hillel Ticktin. A third part of the series will discuss the left communist view of the former USSR. Available for £2.00 (\$3.00) from *Aufheben*, c/o Brighton Unemployed Centre, Ltd., P.O. Box 2536, Rottingdean, Brighton, England.

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# DISCUSSION BULLETIN

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## ABOUT THIS ISSUE

DB94 comes to you about a month late -- that is if all goes well in the printing department. This is rather later than I had hoped when I mentioned the matter in DB94, but when I returned home on March (to p. 5)

## ABOUT THE DISCUSSION BULLETIN

The Discussion Bulletin is affiliated with the Industrial Union Caucus in Education (IUCE). It serves as the financially and politically independent forum of a relatively unknown sector of political thought that places the great divide in the "left," not between Anarchists and Marxists but between capitalism's statist leftwing of vanguardists and social democrats and the real revolutionaries of our era: the non-market, anti-statist, libertarian socialists. They are organized in small groups of syndicalists, communist anarchists, libertarian municipalists, world socialists, socialist industrial unionists, council communists, and left communists. The perspective of these groups with their rejection of capitalism's wage, market, and money system as well as capitalist politics and unionism constitutes the only real alternative to capitalism in both its market and statist phases.

In the DB the often antagonistic groups that make up this sector can debate and discuss the issues that divide them, gain some understanding of their history and future possibilities and begin a process, we hope, of at least limited cooperation.

The pages of the DB are open to anyone in this political sector, the only limitation being that submissions be typewritten, single-spaced, and copy ready. We do no editing here. As to content, we assume that submissions will be relevant to the purpose of the DB and will avoid personal attacks.

### Subscription Information

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Expirations: The last issue of your subscription is indicated by the number on your address label. When your sub expires, we highlight it to remind you.

Sample Copies: A sample copy is sent on request. We mail copies not used to fill subscriptions to people on our extended mailing list

<fgirard@iserv.net> Frank Girard

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*Against Civilization: Readings and Reflections* is the most recent weapon in John Zerzan's ongoing effort to drive planet Earth back to the Stone Age--the OLD Stone Age. I expected his 215 page collection of short pieces by some fifty-one writers to be a series of boring repetitious rants on a single theme. It isn't! Zerzan has chosen wisely and organized his material well. The five headings: "Before Civilization," "The Coming of Civilization," "The Nature of Civilization," "The Pathology of Civilization," and "The Resistance to Civilization," describe the general logic of Zerzan's neo-primitivism so that it emerges as a kind of historical progression. Many of the authors don't really meet the criteria for hard line primitivists. Besides the expected like Rousseau, Marshal Sahlins, Fredy Perlman, and the Unabomber, we find Sigmund Freud, Ivan Illich, William Morris, Friedrich Schiller, Kirkpatrick Sale, and Charles Fourier. The mix produces an interesting variety of insights, made coherent by the book's organization. Unfortunately the final section does not provide the solution that I believe our species can regress to a primitive state successfully. One difficulty in this final section as well as others is the wide variation in the authors' perception of civilization. Zerzan and some of his closest ideologues seem to identify civilization with the domestication of plants and animals while other authors in his collection like Kirkpatrick Sale and William Morris, see industrialization alone as the source of civilization's evils. The result is that for the latter the solution involves a cooperative struggle against capital, the source of industrialization. For the neo-primitivists like Zerzan, Feral Faun, and others resistance must be an individual act or, more accurately, an individual change in thinking, an internal revolution against all civilization. The book is available from the publisher, Uncivilized Books, P.O. Box 11331, Eugene, OR 97440. Price: \$11.50 postpaid.

*Consent or Coercion: An Anarchist Case for Social Transformation and Answers to Questions About Anarchism*, a publication of the Affinity Group of Evolutionary Anarchists, defines anarchism as "...the belief that people can voluntarily cooperate to meet everyone's needs, without bosses or rulers, and without sacrificing individual liberties." And here I had always identified these ideas with socialism. Ed Stamm, whose original draft served as the basis for the pamphlet, has written a persuasive argument for a socialist society. This is especially true of his analysis of the state, laws, crime, human nature, and the like. The pamphlet is less than absolute in its treatment of the economic system anarchism would create, the authors apparently believing that socialism and individual private ownership could co-exist. The questions and answer section discusses such matters as "What about those who argue 'abolish work'?", "Are people so good they can live without government?", and "How do you propose to achieve anarchist social relations?" Twenty pages, \$1 each for 1-4 copies, \$.60 for 15 or more from Dick Martin, Affinity Place, Argentina, B.C. V0G 1B0 Canada or Ed Stamm, PO Box 1402, Lawrence, KS 66044 USA.

*Anarchy, A Journal of Desire Armed*, #46/Fall-Winter '98-9, opens with what strikes me as an amazingly wrongheaded article on the Unabomber, the thesis of which is that "... violence, insurrectionary violence, is a powerful and effective tactic." Nevertheless this is a great issue with three pages of alternative media reviews as well as the usual slash, burn, parry and thrust letters column, McQuinn, Gary Cox, and some new contestants. But the crown jewel is the first detailed non-laudatory article on the Zapatistas that I've ever read. In a fourteen page article, "Behind the Balaclavas of the Mexican Southeast," Sylvie Deneuve and Charles Reeve examine the Marxist-Leninist-Maoist origins of the group that became the Emiliano Zapata Liberation Front as well as the role played by the Maoist



# NOTES, ANNOUNCEMENTS, AND SHORT REVIEWS

**Constructive Interference Microbroadcasting Conference** is scheduled for April 9-11, 1999 in Memphis Tennessee. "This spring in Memphis veterans of the micro-radio movement come together with newborn broadcasters, gestating DJs, and alternative media Divas to communicate, commiserate, and take over the known and unknown universe!" For info write to P.O. Box 102, 111 S. Highland, Memphis, TN 38111 or e-mail <cic\_frm@hotmail.com>

**Sabotage in the American Workplace**, "a collection of firsthand accounts of workplace sabotage" edited by Martin Sprouse, is out of print according to people at AK Distribution who carried it as recently as last year. I am in dire need of a copy. If any DB reader has one he or she is willing to sell, I'd be ever so grateful. Please drop me a card c/o the Discussion Bulletin or e-mail me at

(from p. 17)

## Finances

The eight-week vacation did nothing to help the DB financially. In fact, income for the three months since December 22 was about \$60 less than that of the previous two months. On the brighter side, though --perhaps because of my absence--expenditures declined considerably -- by over a hundred dollars. As usual there is a discrepancy between the balance shown by the DB's check book and that of the bank. Again as usual, I will use the bank balance. (This problem doesn't always arise from my poor grasp of sixth grade math; part of the problem lies in bank charges and remittances of non-U.S. funds, both of which I sometimes forget to include and sometimes include twice.) But actually, we are still in excellent financial health due mainly to the DB's contributors.

**Contributions:** Greg Hall \$4; Joe Tupper \$45; Kevin Glover \$10; John V. Craven \$7; Steve Peterson \$1. Total \$67. Thank you, comrades.

## BALANCE

December 23, 1998

\$366.13

## RECEIPTS

Contributions	\$ 67.00
Subs and sales	82.29
total	\$ 149.29

## DISBURSEMENTS

Postage	\$ 100.00
Printing	36.29
Bank charges	21.00
PO box rent	40.00
Postage due	8.00
total	\$205.29

## BALANCE

March 24, 1999

\$310.13

Fraternally submitted,

Frank Girard for the DB

# What is Missing from New Democracy - Response to Dave Stratman

Dave Stratman seems to fall victim to an array of misconceptions that cloud his view of social relations under capitalism. He lays the problems of all revolutionary movements at the feet of "Marxism". His view of revolution is one of a vague ideal form of democracy that must be achieved in order to realize a future without capitalism. His view of "Marxism" is clearly derived from the failed state-capitalist regimes like the ex-USSR. If one's view of what is Marxism is derived from experience with Stalinist, Trotskyist or Social-Democratic parties, clearly Marxism has failed. Historical materialism is not an ideology, it is a form of analysis meant to cut through lies and ideological baggage, it is meant to be dynamic, constantly analyzing social forces within a historical and material context. In the end his proposals aren't much different from those of past revolutionary movements, not all of which have emanated out of Marxism.

The year 1970 did not see more strikes than at any other time in US history since 1946, the level of strikes were not large. US census bureau figures put the number of strikes at 381, this does not include strikes of less than 1000 people. Even if all these strikes were included in this figure it still would not make for a large wave of strikes. Indeed, the number of strikes appears to be higher in the year 1969 according to government figures. The wave of strikes that peaked in 1946 were the culmination of three years of growing unrest that originated in the movement against the unions no-strike pledge and needless wartime rationing measures. This unrest was quickly recouped by the unions after the war ended. In fact since WWII, strikes have stayed at a consistently low level. Post war prosperity was not meant to control workers, it would be more accurate to say that it was meant to put capitalism back on its feet. None of the movements of the fifties, sixties and early seventies were revolutionary, certainly not those nationalist movements that took power in countries like China in the 40's or Vietnam during the interventions of the French and US war machines.

I agree that Unions are integral in suppressing workers' strikes. Unions help the capitalists maintain order within the working class. Dave Stratman does see the true role that unions have played during strikes. I do not completely agree with his assumptions about government attacks on education. Workers are a part of a class, this includes children, the attacks on schools are primarily meant pull capital out of education to hand it over to the capitalists.

Democracy assumes that there is inequality, it is a compound of two Greek words which mean roughly, rule of the citizen body. There is always an implied distinction between those who are considered citizens and those who are not considered citizens. Obviously, the true citizenship in democracy is given to the wealthiest class of society. The view of democracy as an ideal form is utopian. Like any view of an absolute external ideal form, it cannot exist in a world of concrete economic and political power, it is a mirage that all workers and militants are expected to obediently worship.

Stratman, follows by stating, "the failure of communism has made it appear that there is no possible alternative to the capitalist system." It is unfortunate that he is unable to really look at the nature of the so-called communist countries. He sees the label that both the Stalinists and rulers of capitalist democracy have given it and accepts it. This is where a historical materialist analysis would be particularly helpful, in actually looking at the true class relations of countries that called themselves "socialist". What better way to mobilize workers under the banner of national capital than by simply calling it "socialist".

I also agree with his rejection of reformist solutions, because they do not work, however he continues by putting forward a view of class struggle that sees struggle as a conflict between workers "values" and "capitalist values". I don't think that capitalism values anything but profit and that workers values are as diverse as the working class itself. To talk of values while individualizing class struggle is fine but it seems as if in his historical and political



generalizations that he strays off into a more utopian view of a revolutionary society at the same time that he seems to demonstrate a fear of analyzing social forces at work. The trap which is common today among many militants is that everything even slightly critical of democratic ideology and thought is considered to be innately repressive and evil. It follows in this view that if democratic capitalism is repressive than it is not truly "democratic" enough. I suggest that democracy is a system of capitalism, of the domination of one class by another, like the state-capitalism of the USSR but not usually as overtly repressive.

The vision of a new more "real" form of democracy is one that is too easy for demagogues to plug into. Ex-Stalinist intellectuals like Hobsbawm over the years have effortlessly transformed themselves into lovers of democracy. Social-democracy out of a supposed pragmatism, became an organ of official opposition within the democratic state. The entire history of revolutionary movements within the United States was moved by the idea that by not appearing too "Marxist" or revolutionary that workers would start to flock to them. From the Socialist Party USA expelling its left-wing in 1919 in order to be palatable to "masses" of people. The Socialist Labor Party in the late 1800's in isolating the more militant, often armed, workers from its ranks did so solely out of pragmatism, worshipping at the altar of electoral politics. In today's Labor Party social-democrats, Stalinists, ex-Stalinists and Trotskyists all vie in appearing necessary to be seen as palatable to a union apparatus and despite their attempts to avoid suggestions of "Marxism" still are viewed by those they seek to attract as being "too far left". Expunging the taint of obsolete revolutionary thought is no guarantee that workers will listen to a message of revolution.

When Stratman states that "We have to reach out to the whole world." It seems as if he is proposing something that "tailed" Marxism already proposed before him - a world revolution. How qualitatively different is the plan of New Democracy? A new vision to replace capitalism cannot be that much different from other visions of a world free from the domination of capital, basically, a world without wage-labor, money, poverty, national frontiers or war. At the root Dave Stratman's view of Marxism is what state-capitalist and nationalist guerrilla bourgeoisie have reinterpreted it to be.

He blames the failures of all revolutions of the last two centuries on "Marxism" but it is as if workers had nothing to do with these revolutions or that indeed there were no other revolutionary ideas other than those of the Marxists. The first communist uprisings weren't influenced by Marx's ideas rather they had their origins in the social upheavals of the late 18th and early 19th centuries. The first use of the term communist is found in Babeuf's call to the people of Paris to resist repression during the French revolution in the 1790's. The Paris Commune was influenced by the ideas of Blanqui in part, but more accurately it was influenced by the betrayal of the French government in its attempt to disarm the workers of Paris in the face of an invading army. This communism was organized along the lines of the Paris ward system.

The Soviet Revolution likewise was not the product of Marxist ideas but the product of workers fed up with imperialist war. It was organized along the lines of soviets both in the workplace and community wide, this was not the work of workers who read Das Kapital and then decided to start a revolution. The Bolshevik party subsequently betrayed the principals of communism as they were written in the first platform of the Communist International. They betrayed the German Revolution by arming Von Seeckt, who aided the destruction of revolutionary workers at the hands of the Social-Democratic Freikorps. They betrayed the Chinese Communist uprisings in Shanghai and Canton by giving support to the Nationalist Kuomintang. They supported Mustapha Kemal in Turkey as he set up a nationalist government and massacred by civil war, and capitalism was reinforced with the New Economic Policy, the Bolshevik party assumed greater and greater control over the economy. As the world revolution failed so did the perspective of the revolutionary Bolsheviks. Were these failures of Marxism? No, they were

Yes, these millionaire news hacks and also the bosses Sunday morning gas bags like George Will, Sam Donaldson, and Cokie Roberts rant a lot about Saddam Hussein's nerve gas supplies/weapons vs. US 'democracy' (but never about US support for Hussein when he used gas on the Kurds in 1988 or US use of nerve gasses in their Vietnam war crusade!!).

But if the topic is chemical weapons, it is the big powers, headed by the USA that again holds the aces for unleashing these weapons of barbarism. The USA in fact controls a major share of the worlds chemical and biological weapons depots and research labs. An Associated Press report a few days ago (12/15/98) concerning spillage of 140 gallons of Sarin nerve gas at the Tooele (Utah) "Chemical Disposal Facility" was of course played down by the US Army spokespersons and their views dutifully parroted by the corporate media gas bags. But don't expect the deceitful and hypocritical UN created UNSCOM inspectors to visit these US military bases looking for chemical and biological weapons labs/stockpiles soon! The 'peace-loving' UN inspectors are far too busy pinpointing targets for the US and British Navies and Air Forces to obliterate.

Working class people and activists cannot trust the lies and double talk of the bosses Democrats or Republicans and their media apologists. We need to build up our own new oppositional organizations of struggle, political and industrial, to oppose the attacks on our livelihoods --and our lives. Leaving matters to the "experts" bribed by capital only means letting the profit system destroy the environment, pauperize more millions, speed up those on the job, promote reactionary patriotism & nationalist divisions, and capitalists wars for oil and profits. Los Angeles Workers' Voice, Box 57483, Los Angeles, CA 90057 Internationalists Web: <http://www.ibwp.org> 12/19/98

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or you can receive for free the Internationalist Notes journal by writing IN, Box 1531, Eau Claire, WI 54702



## Bombing for Oil, Profits, and Imperialism

The US war machine is unleashing another veritable rain of ruin on Iraq. A US naval armada backed by fleets of land based B-52 bombers has fired hundreds of deadly Cruise Missiles into Iraqi cities and industries. There can be no doubt that hundreds of innocent civilians are being killed and maimed so that the most powerful sections of the US ruling class will cripple the Iraqi regimes ability to become a regional power and compete with US and British oil companies in the presently saturated oil market. A market where the price of a barrel of crude has dropped from \$23 to \$11 in the past year and a half. This mainly due to a falling demand from the East Asian capitalist states in economic and political crisis.

Also the US and British rulers are using this state sponsored technoterrorism in the Gulf to warn off rival imperialist powers such as France, Russia, China, Japan and Germany who have deals to revive more profitable co-operation with the Hussein regime in Baghdad, etc. In addition there is the rising competition of these major capitalist and state capitalist powers to get their claws into the huge oil reserves in the nearby Caspian Sea. This has made Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan again the focus of deadly competition between big powers as well as small regional powers like Iraq.

There is an ongoing battle for dominance in this region and a key issue now is which corporations will control a big pipeline to pump oil from the Azeri capital of Baku to the West. In a couple of months the Azerbaijan International Operating Company (AIOC) which is a "partnership" headed by the state Oil Company of Azerbaijan but also including US firms like Amoco, Unocal, Exxon and Pennzoil announce their plans on a big oil pipeline which the US oil capitalists consider to be of huge importance as to who will control this strategic area in the world oil market in the 21st century. French, Japanese, Russian and Chinese companies are involved in rival schemes to gain hegemony in drilling and shipping oil from the Caspian. (World Socialist Web-site, 11/16/98)

But all one can get is mostly lies and cover-ups from the corporate-owned US and other media. Is it not amazing that we can hear hours of 'reports' on the war by Dan (the Blather) Rather, and the more liberal Jim Lehrer, on CBS, NBC and PBS et.al., and the subject of the control of markets and profits in oil hardly ever even comes up at all?

ailures caused by the objective situation in the world at the time. They were betrayals, failures of revolutionary vision, by those that the workers entrusted as leaders. Those who adhered to their revolutionary principals were murdered or forced to recant their positions.

I would ask Dave Stratman of New Democracy just what his vision of a revolutionary society is, what does its organization consist of? His use of the word democracy is a dodge for not enunciating a clear idea of what a revolutionary society is to be. What is this great vision of his? It sounds a lot like other revolutionary ideas of the past. A revolutionary movement should have some sort of link with the past, not to vainly assume that others have not thought of these things before. It is this link with the past that allows for a historical perspective that does not falsely attempt to be neutral. Where theory is derived from experience in struggle. Where the revolutionary vision of a future society does not appear in a puff of democratic smoke but has grown out of experience, not adhering to some textbook state-capitalist idea of one stationary "Marxist" analysis but like the more successful revolutionary groups did after the First World War, to attempt to use this analysis as a vibrant changing method of viewing events and placing them in a material historical context which allows revolutionaries a means of putting the lessons learned into practice. I ask Dave Stratman to clarify his ideas and rebut my criticisms. Thank you.

A. Smeaton  
For Internationalist Notes (P. O. Box 1531, Eau Claire, WI 54702)

(from p. 2)

9, my computer, which had been unplugged for eight weeks, refused to wake up. Finding someone capable bringing it back from its slumber consumed time as did getting material for this issue in a form that could be printed.

The eight-week vacation was spent in India along with another retired teacher, also an ex-SLP member. This was his third trip to India. His familiarity with the country made the trip possible. Although our purpose was mainly sightseeing along with some business on his part, I hoped to visit the two groups in India that share the thinking of the political sector that I call "revolutionary libertarian socialist," for lack of a better term. These are the World Socialist Party of India, headquartered in Calcutta, a companion Party of the Socialist Party of Great Britain and Kamunist Kranti, an independent revolutionary group with no close political relatives in the West that they or I know of.

Both groups welcomed the visit. The WSPI, who were holding their annual conference during February, offered to put us up and allow me to participate in the conference as a speaker. Unfortunately several things interfered with our getting to Calcutta, which is nearly a thousand miles southeast of Delhi, where our trip began. For one thing, I brought the plague to India (actually a bad cough, leftover from a cold I had earlier) and coughed my way through from Delhi through Rajasthan for about three weeks until we decided that I had better go to a doctor. Recovery also took time. In addition my friend was having serious problems with an important part of his reason for the trip, obtaining motor scooter parts and arranging for their shipment back to the U.S. And finally we found that it was very difficult to travel in India without having planned an itinerary and made reservations ahead of time. For example, it took us five hours to get train tickets on one leg of our journey. I regret not having reached the Calcutta WSPI conference and hope to publish documents or a report on it when they are available.

I was able to spend about three days total with members of the Faridabad and Delhi KK groups. Much of this time was spent in discussion of the ideas in their pamphlet *The Self-Activity of Wage Workers*, reviewed briefly in DB92. DB95 will contain a report of my thinking on what strikes me as an entirely new approach to "socialist" agitation. Along with this I intend to publish major parts of Loren Goldner's "Revolutionary Termites in Faridabad" as well as KK's response for the benefit of those

(to p. 14)



In the most recent DB FW Girard suggests that *Liberarian Labor Review* is uncritical of Noam Chomsky, perhaps "as a result of Chomsky's public expression of his political sympathies with anarcho-syndicalism and - we learn from the review - his membership in the IWW." I think this is somewhat unfair, as LLR has on several occasions criticized Chomsky's positions. That we prefer not to repeat ourselves in every review hardly means that we have abandoned our critical faculties.

We interviewed Chomsky in LLR #8. One exchange ran as follows (Chomsky's responses edited for space): "In some of your work you speak of efforts such as labor parties and other forms of participating in existing political structures as providing openings for education and organizational efforts of a more radical character. Some have argued that people become enmeshed in these efforts and are likely to lose sight altogether of whatever radical vision they once possessed and to perpetuate illusions that capitalism and the state can be made to work in the interest of the population as a whole.

Chomsky: "I sort of understand the point, but I'm not really sympathetic with it ...

"Let's be quite concrete about this. If there were a labor party in the United States, I'd be against it. But I want it to exist, because it would create options that do not now exist. For example, it would create ways of focusing dissident activity within something close enough to the mainstream to gain real power. And that would be important. ... Nevertheless, if such a structure existed I would be against it because it would be another form of coercion and control, which we should try to transcend. In fact, there's nothing wrong with saying that whatever exists I'd be against, because whatever exists I'll be trying to find out what's wrong about it and make it better. That's the kind of position one ought to take all the time. There's nothing wrong with saying I'm against everything, meaning I'll work within it, I'll try to improve it, I'll be happy if it gets improved, I'll then be against it because I want to improve it further.

LLR: "But isn't it possible that rather than working within these channels - specifically political channels - I think most people have concluded already cannot be made to work in their interest, I think that's why so many people don't vote, for example. The alternatives of direct action, organizing on the job, community in the efforts to recreate the working class oppositional culture we've talked about - albeit on a new footing - seem to have at least as much potential as working within existing legislative structures.

Chomsky: "But see, they're not alternatives. They are in parallel. ... Of course, everybody has finite energies and you have to decide how to distribute them. But it's not an alternative, in fact, you do just everything you can do."

The interview format does not lend itself to debate, but I cannot believe any readers did not understand that we disagreed with Chomsky on these points. Similarly, in a review of Chomsky's *Class Warfare* (LLR 20), we disputed Chomsky's argument that it was necessary to strengthen the federal government in order to defend against corporate power.

"In this instance FW Chomsky is not thinking very clearly. Setting aside the question of whether the U.S. government is actually responsive to the public (a rather dubious proposition), it seems quite clear that advocating a stronger state as a counter to the ruling class which controls it is not only inconsistent with our ideals, it moves us in exactly the opposite direction from where we wish to be going. Instead, we need to be building genuinely public institutions - revolutionary unions and community organizations - to counter the totalitarianism of the ruling class, and put an end to their power while we're at it."

Elsewhere in that review, we noted that "while Chomsky talks eloquently about the ways in which the current political debate is both debased and dangerous, he is on rather shaky ground when it comes to discussing solutions." It would be easy to cite several other examples.

So while we believe Noam Chomsky has made and continues to make important contributions and one of the few dissenting voices to reach a broad public, we have been critical of his views both on specific issues and on his general orientation. We intend to continue exploring these differences in future issues.

Jon Bekken, editorial collective  
Liberarian Labor Review  
PO Box 2824, Champaign IL 61825

## WHY IS THE U.S. BOMBING IRAQ?

*A New Democracy Flyer*

There's much more to the bombing of Iraq than a diversion from Bill Clinton's impending impeachment.

### SOME HISTORY

After the revolution against the U.S.-supported Shah of Iran in 1979, the U.S. armed Iraq to the teeth to stop the spread of revolution in the Middle East. For eight years the U.S. supplied arms and intelligence to both sides in the Iraq/Iran war, which resulted in the death of a generation of rebellious young workers on both sides and stabilized the Hussein regime in Iraq and the Ayatollah Khomeini regime in Iran. The U.S. supported Saddam Hussein's use of poison gas against Kurdish rebels. According to a 1994 Senate Report, the U.S. supplied Iraq with biological agents suitable for germ warfare up through 1989. Only later, when George Bush needed a villain for Desert Storm, did the U.S. object to Hussein's use of the weapons it had supplied.

### SAVAGE HYPOCRISY

President Clinton claims that the bombing of Iraq is meant to prevent Iraq's use of "weapons of mass destruction." But Iraq no longer possesses such weapons or the means to deliver them. Raymond Zalinski, a former U.N. Weapons Inspector in Iraq and Associate Professor in the Biological Institute of the University of Maryland, reported that weapons inspectors had already wiped out any possible chemical and biological weapons sites in 1995. (NPR, 2/13/98) These sites are still monitored. In addition, all of Iraq's missile launchers and engines have been destroyed.

And yet the U.S.-led sanctions are in effect weapons of mass destruction being used against the Iraqi people. A UN Report of June, 1997 verified that sanctions have resulted in the deaths by starvation or disease of 1.2

million Iraqis, 750,000 of them children under five. The Iraqi people are not our enemies, yet it is they, not Hussein, who are suffering. Why has the U.S. waged nearly 10 years of savage war against the Iraqi people?

### CREATING A LEADER

The Middle East not only contains huge oil reserves. It also contains millions of angry and rebellious working people. The choices for them are stark: either nationalism, where they line up behind "their own" elites to fight other workers or some foreign power, or democratic revolution, where working people of every nationality - Arab and Jew, Iraqi and Iranian - unite to overthrow all elite rule.

The goal of U.S. policy has never been to kill Hussein or overthrow him. The real goal has been to wipe out effective opposition to Hussein within Iraq and to establish him as an "anti-U.S. imperialist" leader throughout the Middle East, to lead millions of people up the blind alley of nationalism.

Only by claiming to represent the interests and the views of the American people can our leaders can get away with their repeated atrocities. Only by systematically misinforming and deceiving the American people can they maintain the charade of democracy. Even so, millions of people see through the lies. This same government which has given us NAFTA and welfare reform and corporate-led education reform no more represents ordinary Americans than Saddam Hussein represents ordinary Iraqis.

Our real enemy is the merciless elite which rules in every country. The only answer is a democratic revolution which unites us all. Please copy this flyer and pass it on.

For free info, write New Democracy, P.O. Box 427, Boston, MA 02130 or Newdem@aol.com. Webpage: <http://users.aol.com/newdem>



Electric, General Dynamics, Union Carbide, General Motors, Bank of America, and IT&T. Today, there are new players, such as IBM, Microsoft, CNN, Texas Instruments, Smith Corona, McDonalds, CocaCola, and Kentucky Fried Chicken. We now speak of the "McDonaldization," "Colaization," or "Marlboroization" of the world.

"If highly developed western businesses expand in the Third World, they invest in poor countries and provide jobs. In this transaction, however, Third World countries become partially or totally dependent upon the investing business, which entails negative consequences. In general, the multinationals' influence is seen in their contribution in terms of investments, taxes, bonuses, and other charitable contributions if and when it suits them. They invariably try to bribe or intimidate host officials to create monopolies, even though this means tampering with the host country's power apparatus both economically and politically. Whoever challenges their hegemony faces great personal risk: President Allende of Chile, a highly reform-minded and elected leader was overthrown and murdered by his military, which was believed to have been carrying out the orders of IT&T [which was recently indicted for corrupt business practices]...

"Even if a Third World worker finds a job paying subsistence wages, he or she remains vulnerable, because of job insecurity, to employer blackmail. Economic investment in the Third World, however sizable, remains under the auspices of these multinationals and does not constitute progressive development [in spite of the claims put forth by the U.S. government and its involvement with GATT and NAFTA]. ... It creates serious wage stratification and differentials and, especially in smaller host economies, engenders inflation to such a degree that those who are unemployed or have low-paying jobs have to resort to illegal means to survive. Whenever or wherever these multinationals have been given a free hand, they create monopolies [illegal in the U.S.], pay the lowest possible wages [why we have a set minimum wage in the U.S.], fix prices [also illegal in the U.S.], and take excessive profits [immoral]. Obviously, none of this benefits the host economy [except the politicians who accept the bribes and perks offered.] And so most of the Third World remains Third World, even almost fifty years after de Gaulle coined the term." (*Islamic Horizons*, September/October 1996)

The turbulence in the Middle East will not end until America -- the bully, the "Great Satan" -- removes its presence and stops interfering in Middle Eastern culture, religion, politics, and economics.

*Dawn Pisturino*  
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Dear DB:

The DB92 issue contains much that in our opinion is off the mark. For instance:

According to Internationalism (as quoted by New Unionist):

"The essential elements of the revolutionary process demonstrated by the history of the workers movement are these:

" \* The working class develops class consciousness through a long and difficult struggle at the point of production and in the streets, moving towards political autonomy from other classes and an understanding of its historic tasks..." (Page 14.)

We take working-class class consciousness to mean working-class awareness of its historic mission to bring class rule to an end. Contrary to Internationalism's assertion, the history of the workers' movement does not appear to have demonstrated a developing class consciousness in the workplace. Rather than class consciousness it appears that job consciousness has to date occupied workers' minds front and center when at work.

Nor does it follow, as Internationalism would have it, that workers' struggles "in the streets" would help develop their class consciousness. Here, too, it seems to be a case of "otherwise and to the contrary." For the record demonstrates that when the political field became available for socialist propaganda, street struggles became thoroughly discredited as a working-class tactic. Is Internationalism not conscious of THAT development in working-class history? Let Engels bear witness to it, thus:

"The Communist Manifesto had already proclaimed the struggle for the general franchise, for democracy, as one of the first and most important tasks of the militant proletariat..."

"During the election agitation, it furnished us a means, such as there is no other, of getting in touch with the masses of the people that are still far removed from us, of forcing all parties to defend their views and actions against our attacks before all the people..."

"And so it came about that bourgeoisie and Government feared far more the legal than the illegal action of the workers' party, more the successes of the elections than those of rebellion.

"For here too the conditions of the struggle have essentially been altered. The rebellion of the old style, the street fight behind barricades, which up to 1848 gave the final decision, has become antiquated."

"Already in 1849 the chances of success were rather poor. Everywhere had the bourgeoisie gone over to the side of the governments, 'culture and possessions' greeted and feted the military marching out against the insurrections. The barricade had lost its charm; the soldier saw behind it no longer 'the people,' but rebels, agitators, plunderers, dividers, the dregs of society..."

"Since then, much more has been changed, all in favor of the military...."



"On the side of the insurgents, however, all the conditions have become worse."

--Frederick Engels, 1895, in his introduction to Marx's Class Struggles in France, 1848-1850.

\*

A sea change removed from Internationalism's "essential elements" is Charrman Skelton's Revolution with the Ballot Box. Speaking for the Socialist Party of Great Britain, Skelton correctly points out that "to abolish the state, you need first to gain control of it--you need political power." (DB92, page 5.)

So far, so good. But there is a problem. The SP of GB doesn't go far enough! The reader is left with the thought that the weight of public opinion, expressed through a majority vote for Socialism, would in and by itself ensure the desired control. It is here that De Leonists part company with the SP of GB and adopt the conclusion so forcefully explained by De Leon, thus:

"The futility of the ballot alone, however triumphant, was strikingly illustrated nine years ago during the first Bryan (William Jennings Bryan, Democratic party hopeful in the 1896 U.S. presidential election) campaign. The political temperature against the plutocratic rulers of the land had risen to a point that they, for a moment, considered the battle at the ballot-box lost in advance. That, however, did not disconcert them. Through their national mouthpiece, Mark Hanna, they threatened to stop production. In other words, they threatened to go on strike. The threat was no idle bombast. They could. It was known that they could. Craft unionism placed it in their power to do so. The threat had its effect. But let the capitalist attempt, under the pressure of the political temperature raised by the ballot of labor--let him attempt to strike. In possession of the might conferred and implied by the industrial organization of the working class, the working class would forthwith lock out the capitalist class. Without political organization, the labor movement cannot triumph; without economic organization, the day of its political triumph would be the day of its defeat."

--Daniel De Leon, in a 1905 address then titled The Preamble of the I.W.M.

\*

There is a final point that we wish to make at this time. It concerns the IWM's abandonment of the political process--its 1908 scuttling of the political clause which had appeared in the preamble to its constitution, which preamble had been adopted at its founding convention just three years before, to wit:

"Between these two classes [the working class and the employing class] a struggle must go on until all the toilers come together on the political, as well as on the industrial



## POLITICAL CORRUPTION AND GLOBAL CAPITALISM

One of the myths perpetuated by American business is that wealth is somehow created out of nothing. Wealth, ~~under~~ capitalism, is not "created," it is merely transferred from one segment of the population to another.

This can easily be seen on a global scale. When Asia's economy was booming, the American economy was lagging behind. Now that Asia is struggling to maintain itself, the American economy is "robust" (according to Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan.)

The Middle East has been a key contributor to American prosperity at its own expense. Dr. Ilyas Bayunus, professor of sociology at SUNY Ithaca, explains it this way:

"When looked at from a Muslim and Third World viewpoint, we can see an... answer: that of neocolonialism, or the use of local proxies to exploit local resources for the former colonial master's benefit. Muslim countries, regardless of their colonial past... are now submitting to neocolonialism... [which] seeks indirect rule through rationalizing, apologizing, seeking excuses for its actions. However, the option to intervene with force is always open. It is a form of remote-control colonial rule and is far more economical and cost effective in terms of men, machines, and time invested.

"In essence, colonialism and neocolonialism serve those multinational industries that are (or were) in the vanguard of creating western global hegemony. Both seek to ensure perpetually dependent 'peripheries' ruled by a technologically superior industrialized western global economic system. Hence, colonialism and neocolonialism use 'underdeveloped' countries as reservoirs of cheap resources and dirt-cheap labor, and thus actually discourages any significant industrialization in the Third World... What this means is that western economics and industrial progress depends on the rest of the world remaining impoverished.

"In this respect, the west lures, intimidates, bribes, and props up insecure and archaic monarchs, undereducated but arrogant military rulers, and opportunist pseudodemocrats. This is especially so in the Muslim world, where the West sometimes even handpicks 'yes men' to rule on its behalf...

"Americans are the inventors as well as the greatest beneficiaries of neocolonialism... As the economic interests of American multinationals expanded, American power also expanded. In the Middle East, this was especially true after WW II. Those who resisted and continue to resist this policy of neocolonialism were called 'fundamentalists' and other names, ostracized internationally, and branded as practitioners of 'state-sponsored terrorism.' Iran, Sudan, Libya, and Syria are cases in point...

"American multinationals are the dynamos behind and the main beneficiaries of American neocolonialism. Some of the major American multinationals are legends: Exxon, General



obedience in a "democracy" in which the goals of society are not up for discussion and in which the idea of people acting collectively for their own goals is considered subversive.

### WHAT'S RIGHT WITH THE SCHOOLS?

Teachers and students and their families share goals which contradict the goals of the elite, and they work to achieve these goals in every way they know how in spite of elite domination. The gigantic effort by corporate and political leaders to impose education reform is necessary precisely because the people in the schools have worked for their goals with enough success to threaten elite control.

When teachers stimulate and challenge; when they encourage all their students to learn and inspire them to think about the world as it really is; when they create a nurturing environment;

when they fight for

smaller class sizes;

when they offer each

other words of support:

when they do

any number of

things they do every

day, they are opposing elite goals for education and working for the shared goals of ordinary people.

When students help each other, or raise critical questions, or refuse to join in the race for grades and approval; when they exercise their curiosity and intelligence; even when they hang on the phone for hours, talking about "life," they are resisting elite goals and working for a better concept of life.

When parents listen sympathetically to their children, or talk with their friends or each other about the school or raising kids; when people do these things that they do every day, they are resisting elite goals and working for the opposite values of solidarity

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and equality and democracy.

To the extent that students succeed in real learning and teachers in teaching and parents in raising their children to be thoughtful and considerate, they succeed in spite of the education system, not because of it.

The remarkable thing about the public schools isn't that some teachers become demoralized and "burned out," or that some students drop out or do poorly, but that so many teachers and students achieve so much in the face of a system designed to fail.

### EDUCATION AND REVOLUTION

Capitalist society is based on slavery: the enslavement of workers to the wage system and the enslavement of human beings to things. Education worthy of the name must help set us free, not further bind us in chains.

The conflict over

the goals of education is

part of the class war over

the goals of society. Only a

movement which chal-

lenges the goals and val-

ues and power of the elite

can change education.

There are a thousand questions about society which elite institutions will never raise but which are critical to our future. The revolutionary movement must consider anew the goals of human society and the measures of human achievement. It must re-examine our relationship to technology and to Nature. It must enable people to transform work and play into sources of creativity and fulfillment.

We do not have the power at this point to change education, but we can begin to pose these questions. The most liberating and humanly fulfilling education for all of us will come as we take part in the struggle to overthrow elite rule and recreate human society. ♦

"Thanks to Bill Griffen for the H. Mann quote.

field, and take and hold that which they produce by their labor through an economic organization of the working class, without affiliation with any political party." (Our emphasis.)

By this act of dismemberment the IWW militated against the socialist movement. Repudiation of the political field meant and continues to mean repudiation of the one means of reaching the millions mass with a message aimed at awakening class consciousness among them. But this is not all. By chopping off the political clause the IWW threw away the political umbrella under which it had been permitted to preach revolution and, as De Leon had warned, became little more than a "conspiracy." Time after time De Leon pointed up the idiocy of this anarchistic, "bullets for ballots," "direct action" approach to resolution of the social question, action which, contemptuous of the political arena, would (and did) merely succeed in exposing its perpetrators to harsh State retribution.

In short, Frank, we think it was no narrow or petty posturing by De Leon and the SLP that characterized their castigation of the IWW for having deserted the political field. For this reason we are puzzled by your charge that the De Leonist exposure of the desertion was (and presumably in your opinion remains) a "sectarian" exercise. Quoting you as follows:

"As for De Leon stigmatizing the IWW as an anarchist, certainly that is true, a typical sectarian charge." (DB92, page 9.)

"Why did De Leonists stigmatize the IWW as an anarchist?

For the same reason the IWW referred to De Leon as a dictator; it was a convenient weapon in the sectarian rivalries of the early part of the century." (DB92, page 21.)

### SECTARIAN??

Sincerely,

THE DE LEONIST SOCIETY OF CANADA

### REPLY:

I would argue that the DeLeonists left the IWW in 1908 has far more complex reasons than the removal of the political clause from the Preamble at the convention that year. For one thing the direct action majority that voted to deny De Leon his delegate status and thus his seat at the convention was the result of an internal political struggle, a falling out between the leadership of the SLP and that of the IWW. The SLP's opponents in the IWW headquarters who engineered the arrival at the convention of the "overall brigade" that provided them with the majority: Trautman, St. John, and Edwards were not anarchists. Nor, in any real way, were the overall brigade. In fact, the IWW continued to be run for the next ten years by staunch members of the very political left wing of the Socialist Party, including Bill Haywood. None of these were anarchists. Rather, the IWW leadership were concerned about what they regarded as the unproportionally great influence of the tiny SLP in the union. They felt that this, along with De Leon's authoritarian reputation and the SLP's hostility to the Socialist Party, prevented their recruiting in the latter. They seem not to have considered the possibility that De Leon's disciples would organize as the Detroit IWW and compete with them. But to say that elimination of the political clause in the Preamble made the IWW into an anarchist organization is simply wrong. I should add that the word *partisan* rather than *sectarian* more accurately expressed my meaning in my comment.

--Frank Girard



Just to drive the point home about fascism that I made in my last letter, here are some quotes from a freshman university text called EUROPEAN DEMOCRACIES, written by Jurg Steiner. For those who do not understand the nature of fascism, or have been misled by the propaganda of the authoritarian left, let this "Dick and Jane" of political science open your eyes.

*The position of Neofascists is at the authoritarian extreme (as opposed to the other extreme, individualism, LG) because for them, authority has the highest priority. The nation counts more than the individual, whose main task is to serve the fatherland... the label (extreme right-winger) is in many ways misleading... They are rather spread all the way from the left to the right. This ambivalent attitude to the free market could be seen with Mussolini and Hitler... The notion of competition was too disorderly for them. Fascists advocated a strong state that would show leadership in economic matters... (and)... deep down felt only a disdain for the capitalist mentality... Mussolini was most explicit in the implementation of corporate ideas... A national assembly should bring together the interests of farmers, business, workers... It would only be necessary for Il Duce to give clear directions which way the country should go.*

It should be obvious that the opinions of Libertarians, tax protestors, militias, Freemen, etc bear no resemblance to fascism whatsoever. They are extreme individualists - the opposite end of the spectrum. The authoritarian left with its desire that government should run everything is far closer to being fascist than they are. Slandering opponents as fascists is an old trick the Leninists perfected back in the 1920's (eg, anarcho-fascism, social-fascism, and Trotskyite fascism) and is being used today by their children, the Political Correctness Squad. They hate the individualists because they are the greatest opponents of the authoritarian left's cherished dream - society completely dominated by state capitalism.

Frank questions a couple of points in my last letter. Yes, Germany was politically backward - compared to Britain, France the USA etc. It's governmental system, while not totalitarian was highly authoritarian. Much of the country was backward economically - some 40% peasant in the 1920's - and it was in the most backward areas like Bavaria and Junker-controlled East Prussia that Nazism flourished. Italy, especially the South, was a poor Third World country, with landlords and the Church dominating a poverty-stricken peasantry. Everywhere that fascism prevailed, (and Leninism too,) the Church long prior, had imposed a corporatist and collectivist world view upon the population. The individual was of secondary importance to Church and State. This was not the case in the USA, Canada, Australia etc, where the tendency was more the primacy of the individual. No one would ever call turn-of-the-century Germans "Rugged Individualists", but the label certainly applied to Americans. Totalitarian state capitalism, whether Leninist or Fascist, is the result of particular social, historical and economic conditions which simply do not exist to any great degree in the contemporary "democracies".

Larry Gambone

have been used ever since to instill in young people a respectful attitude toward those in power. William Bennett, while Secretary of Education in the Reagan Administration, explained, "The primordial task of the schools is the transmission of social and political values." In a class society, the values which the schools are designed to transmit are the values of the dominant class - competition, inequality, the sanctity of private property, and the belief that the good things in society trickle down from the elite.

At the heart of the education system, there is a conflict over its goals. On one side stand educators and parents and students, most of whom share democratic values and want to see students educated to the fullest of their ability. On the other side stand the corporate and government elite, the masters of great wealth and power. Their goal is that students be sorted out and persuaded to accept their lot in life, whether that be the executive suite or the unemployment line, as fitting and just, and that social inequality be legitimized and their hold on power reinforced.

This conflict over the goals of schooling is never acknowledged openly, yet it finds its way into every debate over school funding and educational policy and practice, and every debate over education reform.

#### WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE SCHOOLS?

The corporate critique of the schools has served to cover up what's really wrong with them: the schools promote inequality, competition, and unquestioning acceptance of the social order.

The elite pursue these educational goals in many ways. Shortages in school funding undermine the work of students and teachers and tell them that they are not val-

ued. School-business partnerships promote business values in the schools. Textbooks teach that history is made by presidents and kings; ordinary people are dismissed as passive victims or a dangerous problem.

But many of the means of achieving elite goals for education are far more subtle:

\*The schools assume that there are big differences in people's intelligence and that most people are not very smart, and are designed to "prove" these low expectations. Teachers are trained to find supposed differences in children's abilities; standardized, "norm-referenced" tests are designed to sort kids out and produce a range of test scores which match the social hierarchy - in other words, which show that richer people are smarter. Shortages of teachers and textbooks, lack of support for their work, and countless other devices are means by which students and teachers are set up to fail.

\*The schools use competition and ranking to legitimize the social hierarchy. Students reluctant to compete for approval get low marks; what is really a conflict over values is seen as a failure of students' intelligence. For teachers, school life consists more often of an isolated struggle to survive than being encouraged to join with other teachers to nurture students.

\*Course content often has no value except as a measure of students' willingness to master it. Much of the content consists of "facts" torn out of their social context, with all the life sucked out of them, because their life is rooted in the class war the elite seek to obscure.

These and other means are used by schools to prepare most students for working lives spent performing boring tasks with unquestioning